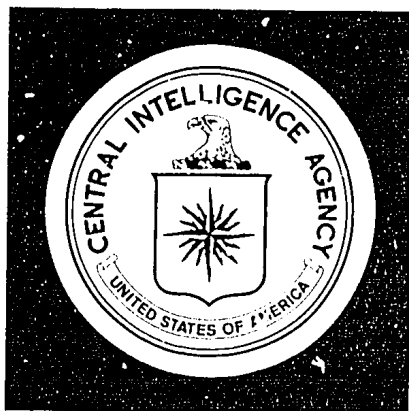


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Weekly Summary

Special Report

State Dept. review completed

Force Reduction Talks Begin

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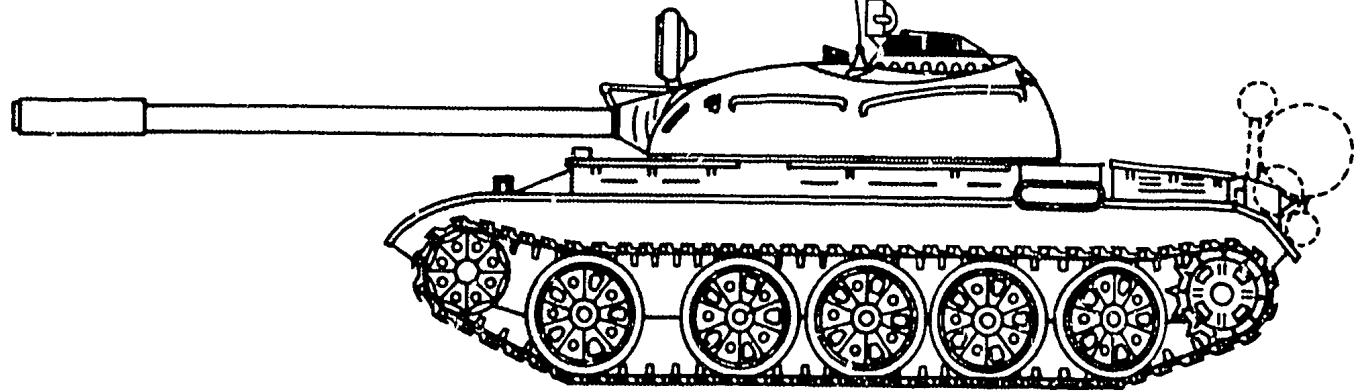
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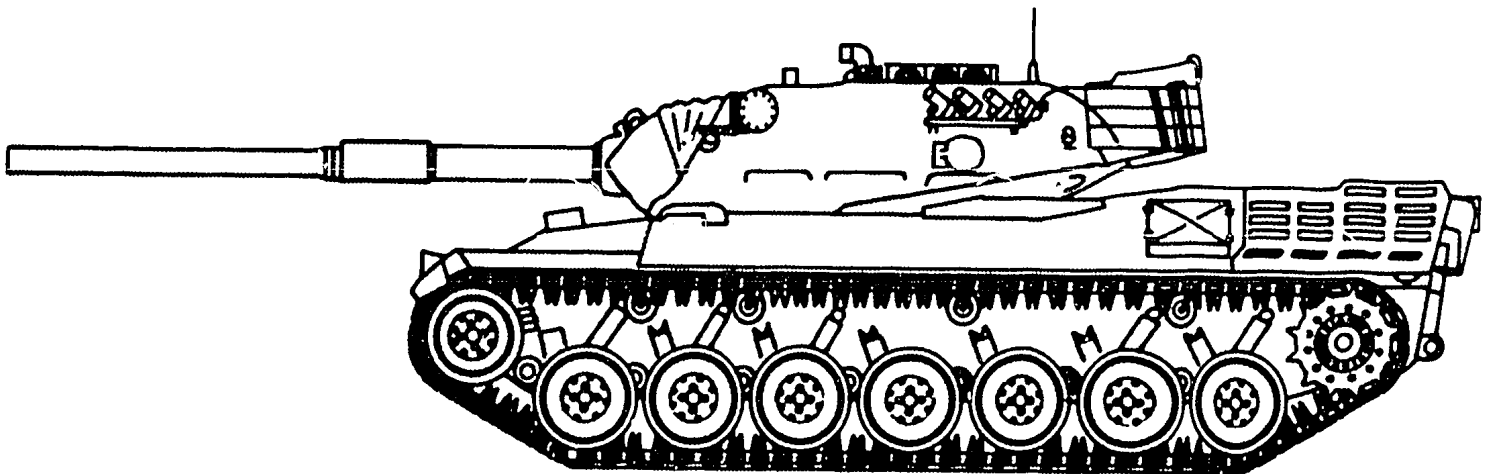
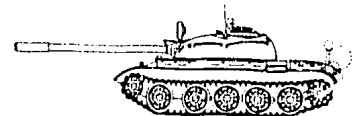
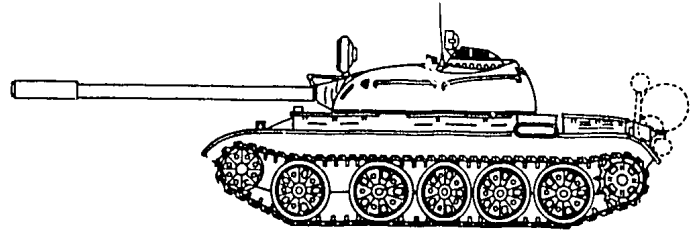
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FORCE REDUCTION TALKS BEGIN



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Summary

Talks on the "mutual reduction of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe" are scheduled to begin in Vienna on 30 October. Demanded by the West in return for the European security conference, these negotiations will figure importantly in determining detente's future course.

The Western side hopes that the talks will produce an agreement maintaining—but at a lower level—the strategic balance in Europe. Such an outcome will depend in part on the unity of the allies. The West Europeans will be especially touchy if the talks take on the look of a US-Soviet bilateral exercise. They will also be guarding against measures that could limit future European defense cooperation. Although NATO will be starting the talks with a "common negotiating position," allied points of view diverge on many specific issues, and the talks will put the Alliance under considerable strain.

The Soviets, for their part, will make the most of any signs of Western disarray. Moscow is engaging in the force reduction talks primarily because it considers negotiations on force reduction to be part of the price of detente and not because of a wish to reduce Soviet troop strength in Europe. The clear signs of Western disunity and the public mood in the US and several West European countries favoring quick reductions, however, may incline Moscow toward a somewhat more positive view of the negotiations. On particular issues that will arise in the talks, Soviet positions seem to be in the formative stage.

BACKGROUND

Although the idea of troop cuts in Europe started out as a Soviet ploy in the 1950s, Moscow was no longer pressing the matter in 1965. Shortly thereafter, NATO adopted the proposal as its own. In the late 60s and early 70s, the West regularly proposed force reduction talks as a counter to the Soviet campaign for a European security conference.

The allies formally invited the East to talk about force reductions in 1968. After several such invitations, Moscow responded in 1970, linking force reductions with a European security conference and maintaining that stationed (i.e., foreign) forces should be the ones reduced. The West replied that indigenous forces should be included. In 1971, Brezhnev included the idea of European troop reductions in his "peace plan." The allied

response, something of a delaying tactic, was to send former NATO Secretary General Brosio to explore Soviet views. Instead of receiving Brosio in Moscow, the Soviets waited until the Nixon-Brezhnev summit in the spring of 1972 when they agreed, in exchange for a US pledge to start preparations for a European security conference, that force reduction talks could also begin. The following fall, it was agreed that preparations for the security conference begin in November 1972, with the conference itself to start in June 1973, and that the initial force reduction talks would open in January 1973 and actual negotiations begin in September or October 1973.

The problem then arose of who should take part in the force reduction talks. NATO began by inviting the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary to meet in Geneva. In part because of Romanian insistence, the

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Soviets responded that the talks should be open to "all interested states." The Soviets also suggested Vienna as the site. The allies eventually agreed on Vienna; they also agreed that Romania and Bulgaria should be added to the list of participants.

The initial, or preparatory, force reduction talks did begin in late January 1973. The Soviets almost immediately touched off another controversy by claiming that Hungary should not take part. As a result the initial talks were taken up largely with this matter, which was settled in June by what amounts to an agreement to disagree: Hungary will start out as a special participant (observer) but the question can be reopened.

On the allied side, the long impasse over Hungary's status produced considerable strain, much to the delight of the Soviets. Many of the allies wanted to fight hard to keep Hungary in the talks, on the grounds that Hungary's absence would leave a large loophole which would allow the Soviets to station on Hungarian territory the troops they had withdrawn from other parts of Central Europe. A number of NATO members felt that the US was much too willing to come to a quick, disadvantageous agreement with the Soviet Union on Hungary's status, thus confirming a lingering West European fear that the major decisions in the force reduction talks would be reached bilaterally between the US and USSR.

Once the Hungarian question was put aside, the other business of the preliminary talks was finished with dispatch. The Soviets managed to have the word "balanced" struck from the title of the talks. They knew full well what the West means by the term—that Warsaw Pact troop cuts should be larger than NATO cuts. The West was successful in inserting the phrase "associated measures," which implies that reductions should be accompanied by a variety of constraints on the activity of troops. The Soviets had long opposed such constraints. The agenda of the talks was left open, and any of the direct participants may add items. The West had originally sought a more detailed agenda, but when it became clear that the Soviets would insist on the removal of several desired items, the allies decided it was wiser to

leave the matter of the agenda largely up in the air.

ALLIED CONCERNS

From late July until last week, the allies labored to arrive at a common position for the force reduction talks. The kernel of the document setting forth this position is a US proposal that has been modified to take allied views into account. Most of the serious disagreements within the Alliance, however, have merely been papered over. Indeed, the only common position was not to take a clear position on a number of issues. This together with the allied experience during the initial talks, indicates that maintaining allied unity will be one of the major problems of the negotiations.

Many of the allies have serious misgivings about the whole idea of force reductions, and

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TALKS

WEST

EAST

Direct Participants

United States
Canada
Great Britain
West Germany
The Netherlands
Belgium
Luxembourg

Soviet Union
East Germany
Poland
Czechoslovakia

Special Participants (Observers)

Norway
Denmark
Italy
Greece
Turkey

Romania
Bulgaria
Hungary*

**The question of Hungary's status may be reopened.*

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Soviet, British, and US delegations at preparatory talks in Vienna

these have not lessened as the talks approach. The West Europeans are supporting the force reduction talks primarily because they think the negotiations might be useful in fending off US congressional pressure for pulling troops out of Europe. At the same time, many have come to see in the Vienna talks an opportunity for acceding to public pressures for cuts in their own forces. On the other hand, the West European members of NATO share three basic concerns about the talks.

- They fear that as a result of troop reductions, the security of Europe will suffer. They insist, therefore, that "undiminished security" be one of the cardinal principles of the negotiations. Troops might be reduced, but this must be done so precisely that the strategic balance between Warsaw Pact and NATO forces is not disturbed.

- They fear that the Soviets might suggest measures during the talks that could limit the possibilities for future European defense cooperation or progress toward a more unified Europe generally. The European Community has already held two unprecedented discussions—on Italian initiative—to consider possible relationships between force reductions and European integration.

- They fear that the force reduction exercise could easily turn into a US-Soviet show. They will be sensitive to bilateral contacts and will insist on maximum European involvement in the major proceedings of the negotiations.

The British have long been the most skeptical. During the initial talks, they fought harder than anyone else on Hungarian participation and thought the "solution" a bad bargain. After a re-evaluation of their force reduction policy this summer, the British were less obstinate during discussions of the common allied position. In the negotiations that are about to begin, however, they will often strongly diverge from US views on both substance and tactics.

London's qualms about force reductions derive from its analysis of Soviet motives. In a long paper submitted to NATO in August, the British maintained that the Soviets were still bent on altering the balance of power in Europe in their favor, on undermining the military and political effectiveness of NATO, on obtaining a substantial reduction of the US military presence in Europe, and on preventing the West European governments from taking steps to fill the gap through greater defense cooperation. A serious Soviet negotiating posture in the Vienna talks is simply not

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compatible with these long-term aims, according to the British. They think that the Soviets will at least try to drag out the force reduction exercise as long as possible.

The West Germans—probably the most positive of the allies about force reductions—view the talks as a logical extension of Ostpolitik as well as a way of minimizing US troop cuts. Bonn hopes that reductions in the Bundeswehr will come out of the talks. The West Germans will nevertheless be guarding against an agreement that would have the effect of turning Germany into a special disarmament zone.

Belgium will continue to be a thorn in the side for the US. Having appointed themselves spokesman for the smaller members of the Alliance, the Belgians will have much to say and will diverge from agreed positions when it suits them. They are also likely to continue to be sticky on procedural points. They will especially champion the use of multilateral sessions for negotiating purposes and oppose the "emissary" system by which the US and only one other NATO member negotiate with the Soviet Union and one other representative of the Warsaw Pact. This system used extensively during the initial talks, is favored by the US and many other allies as an effective way to make progress on complex negotiating points. The Dutch will be less troublesome than the Belgians. The present Socialist government in the Netherlands heartily supports the reduction exercise as a means to reduce the Dutch army.

Denmark and Norway not only approve of the objectives of the force reduction exercise but will be trying to have it expanded to include their territory. The Greeks and the Turks, on the other hand, will be fighting hard to prevent any extension of force reductions to them. They will also be pressing for measures that would protect them from Soviet troop movements as a result of a force reduction agreement.

The Italians have been prominent among those insisting that nothing be agreed upon which would limit progress toward European unity. More immediately, Rome fears that the price for coverage of Hungarian territory may well turn out

to be the inclusion of Italy. This apprehension is far from groundless since the Soviets argued throughout the initial talks that if the allies wanted full Hungarian participation, Moscow would demand full Italian participation. Both Hungary and Italy are now special participants (observers) in the talks. If the question of Hungary's role is reopened and if the West tries to have Hungary's territory covered by a non-circumvention provision or by constraints on military activity, the Soviet counter-demand is almost certain to be for similar coverage of Italy.

France

There are no signs that France's opposition to the force reduction talks is softening. French representatives are not likely to be present any time soon, either as full participants or observers. The French have long objected to the bloc-to-bloc aspect of the negotiations. They may also feel that the talks are shaping up well enough so that a French presence is not necessary.

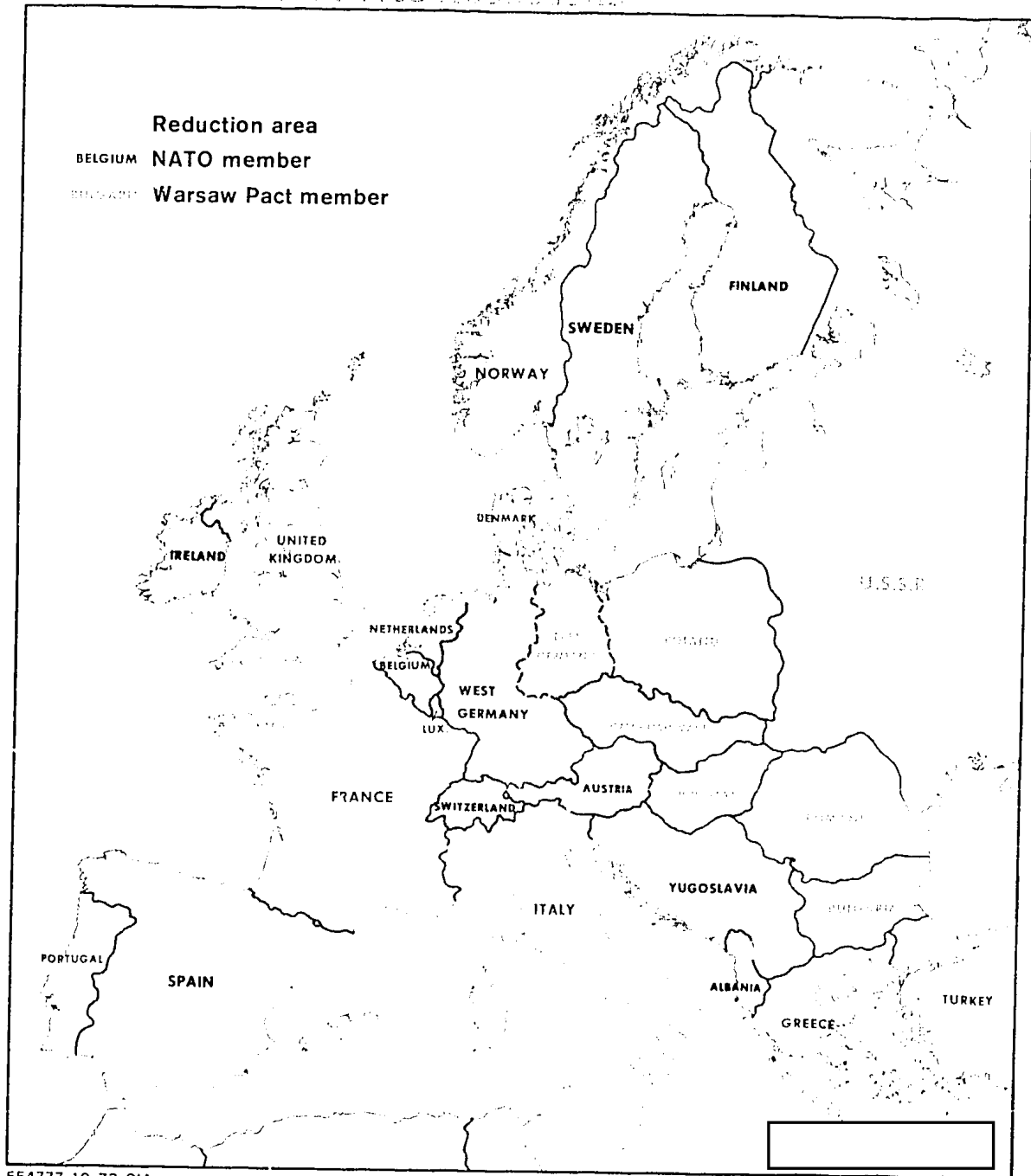
Paris has found ways to involve itself in the talks without participating, however, and it will likely continue to do so. Last spring, France did not oppose discussion in an EC forum with the French present of the implications of force reductions for West European integration. This consideration of a security topic in an EC forum—to which the French had consistently objected previously—was probably viewed by Paris as a way to highlight the dangers of the talks.

The French agree with the other West European allies that the possibility of future defense cooperation must not be circumscribed by the force reduction talks. In fact, their suspicion that the negotiations might lead in this direction is among the factors that seem to be causing them to re-think their defense policy. Foreign Minister Jobert said in June, "European defense is beginning to look more and more as if it should have its own character." So far, this hint has not yet been followed up in any concrete way, but it has tantalized integration-minded Europeans.

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Potential Area for Force Reductions



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THE SOVIET APPROACH

The Soviets are not engaged in the force reduction exercise because they are convinced of its merits. They are talking because the subject seems an unavoidable concomitant of their policy of detente and because it has been linked to the European security conference. Still the initial defensive and negative Soviet attitude toward the force reduction negotiations has changed as Moscow has begun to appreciate the potential benefits. The Soviets evidently believe domestic US pressures for reductions give them valuable leverage both in the force reduction talks and in other dealings with the US. The preliminary talks gave the Soviets an insight into the potentially disruptive effect of the talks on NATO. In addition, the Soviets may hope that a force reduction agreement could precipitate a rush by Western European countries to reduce their forces. While an agreement on force reductions could eventually contribute to destabilization in Eastern Europe, the actual process of negotiating allows the Soviets to increase the kind of "coordination" that strengthens their control.

THE EAST EUROPEAN ROLE

Moscow's campaign to close ranks argues against any significant show of independence by the East Europeans—except, of course, Romania—at the force reduction talks. Although they are not direct participants, the Romanians will push to be heard, not because they expect to be successful, but because they want to dramatize their position.

The general issues implicit in force reductions have been the subject of considerable tugging and pulling in most East European countries for several years. For example, the East European dilemma is how to protect purely national interests and ensure Communist control while getting the Soviet military out of the area. The Hungarians would be delighted to play a significant role in the force reduction talks. They will not press the issue, however, in the face of a firm Moscow position. To an important degree, Hungary's frustration is shared by other Warsaw

Pact regimes, particularly those making up the northern tier.

Although East European arguments on force reductions have thus far revolved around strategic interests, national priorities, and the impact on relations with Moscow, the question of stationed and indigenous forces may also loom large. Any agreement by Moscow to withdraw a significant portion of its forces could well spark fears among East European leaders that the Kremlin will pressure them to increase the combat effectiveness of their own forces. This in turn touches on the question of resource allocations—a sensitive matter to regimes determined to use detente to achieve rapid growth of consumer-oriented economies.

Moscow's allies will, of course, go along with whatever the Kremlin decides will be conducive to getting US troops out of Germany and reducing NATO and especially West German forces. How willingly they give their support, however, will be decided by how much the bargain will cost them, both financially and in terms of their national interests.

THE MAIN ISSUES**The Area To Be Covered**

The allies are agreed that force reductions should be restricted to Central Europe. This would include the territory of West Germany and the Benelux countries on the Western side and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia on the Eastern side. Hungary's status is open, but the allies would find it difficult to include that country without making substantial concessions. There is thus allied sentiment for a "constraints" area—within which there would be limitations on military activity. There is, however, no allied consensus on this point.

Soviet views on the area in which reductions will take place are replete with ambiguities. Post-war disarmament proposals from the Soviet bloc were transparently intended to neutralize Germany, and the Soviet approach in force

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reductions is rooted in these origins. Partly in response to West German views, the Soviets may now be willing to consider a broader area of reductions. Presumably their acceptance of full participation by Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Benelux countries at the preliminary talks means that Moscow is prepared to include them in the area of reductions. There is still no certainty that the Soviets favor reductions throughout Central Europe or that they will not seek to place certain countries in some type of constraints zone. Soviet academics have repeatedly argued that force reductions in Central Europe cannot be isolated from the global strategic alignment.

Scope of Reduction

One of the basic allied tenets about force reductions is that they must be asymmetrical: since the Warsaw Pact has more troops in Europe than NATO does, the Pact must make greater reductions. The allied position for the talks thus calls for the imposition of a "common ceiling" on NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe—i.e., neither group of forces must be allowed to exceed 700,000 men. The British have had trouble with the common ceiling proposal since the US first introduced it in late July, arguing that it would be wiser to make reductions on the basis of a measurement of combat capability than purely on the basis of manpower. Although they have been partially convinced that combat capability is difficult to measure and that the common ceiling concept in practice will not amount purely to a percentage manpower reduction, the British are still wary. They have been urging—with the support of Italy and the Netherlands—that while the concept may be presented to the other side, the precise figure of 700,000 should not be used.

The Soviets have made the point repeatedly that force reductions should not be to the detriment of any participant. Beyond this, they have said little about the central question of the magnitude of reductions, and their efforts have been directed mainly at rebutting the NATO concept of asymmetry. Soviet commentators contend that only equal reductions would maintain the security of each side, leaving open the question of

whether equal numerical or equal percentage reductions is meant. Given the Soviet appraisal of the relative strengths of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, Moscow might not acknowledge significant differences between the two approaches.

Phasing

The allies have agreed to attempt to pursue their force reduction goals through a two-phase process. During the first phase, the Soviets would be called upon to withdraw one tank army (both men and tanks) and the US would withdraw an equal proportion of men. This would amount to a 15-percent reduction by each side. The Soviets would be withdrawing approximately 68,000 troops and 1,700 tanks; the US would be pulling out 29,000 troops. In the allied concept, the US would be allowed to maintain heavy equipment in Europe on account of the "asymmetry of conditions," i.e., the fact that Soviet troops and materiel could be returned more quickly to Central Europe. In addition to reductions in US and Soviet forces, the allies in the first phase will be seeking agreement of the other side to hold a second phase and agreement to the concept of a common ceiling (but not necessarily—at this time—to a specific number).

While this is the agreed position for the first phase, some of the allies are not pleased with it. The British, although they succeeded in obtaining a specific mention of Soviet tanks in the allied position, are still not sure that reductions are being figured sufficiently in terms of combat capability. They have also argued that US troop cuts should be no larger than 10 percent. The Turks are uneasy about the effects of the first phase on NATO's flanks.

The allies are leaving the proposed second phase of reductions largely undefined at this point. The general feeling is that it is better not to be locked into a second phase until they see how the first goes and that it is better tactics to concentrate during the first phase on first-phase demands only. It is understood that the focus of the second phase will be on further Soviet reductions and on non-US NATO forces. The allies will be insisting to the Pact that the NATO countries

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Soviet armor and ski troops

themselves must decide how the indigenous force reductions of the second phase should be distributed.

The Soviets may favor a sequential approach to reductions which would not differ too much in practice from Western concepts of phasing—with reduction of foreign forces coming first.

Stationed and Indigenous Forces

The allied agreement on the contents of the two phases of the negotiations represents a careful compromise on how stationed and indigenous forces should be included in the talks. The British, skeptical about all force reductions, are especially leery of including indigenous forces. The West Germans realize that cuts in the Bundeswehr during the second phase would help satisfy internal German pressures, and the Dutch would also like to cut their forces. These differing perspectives, submerged for the time being, could well bubble to the surface again as specific goals for the second phase are planned.

Before 1971, the Soviets spoke of reductions of foreign (stationed) forces only. Brezhnev's omission of "foreign" from his speech at the 24th Party Congress was taken to mean that the Soviets were prepared to discuss reductions of both categories of forces. The Soviets are clearly inter-

ested in the reduction of West German troops, the most significant NATO indigenous forces in the tentative reductions area. In recent months the Soviets have taken the position that the balance between foreign and indigenous forces should be maintained; in August, a Soviet radio commentator said that foreign and indigenous forces should be reduced simultaneously and by equal amounts.

Constraints

The subject of constraints has been the most vexing to the allies in their efforts to arrive at a common negotiating position. They have, in fact, not been able to do so. In general, two types of constraints have been discussed: those that would come before reductions and constraints that would accompany reductions. The West Germans and British had until recently been the champions of pre-reduction constraints—prior announcement of US and Soviet force movements and major exercises; limits on the size, location, number, and duration of major exercises; the exchange of observers at major exercises; and the like. If constraints could be negotiated before force reductions, Bonn and London have maintained, Soviet motives could be carefully examined. Recently, both Britain and West Germany have grown skeptical about some pre reduction constraints, realizing that allied demands could produce unacceptable Soviet counter-demands. If pre-reduction constraints were negotiated, the West Germans—supported by Italy and Norway—would want to hold open the possibility of applying the constraints outside the reduction area. The West Germans, along with Belgium, Canada, and Italy, would also want NATO forces other than those of the US included in order to give a multinational character to the first part of the force reduction negotiations. The UK has objected to applying pre-reduction constraints to indigenous forces on the grounds that future European defense cooperation might be adversely affected.

The allies have also been discussing constraints that would accompany force reductions limits on the movement of forces into the reductions area, limits on movements of forces across national boundaries, notification of major

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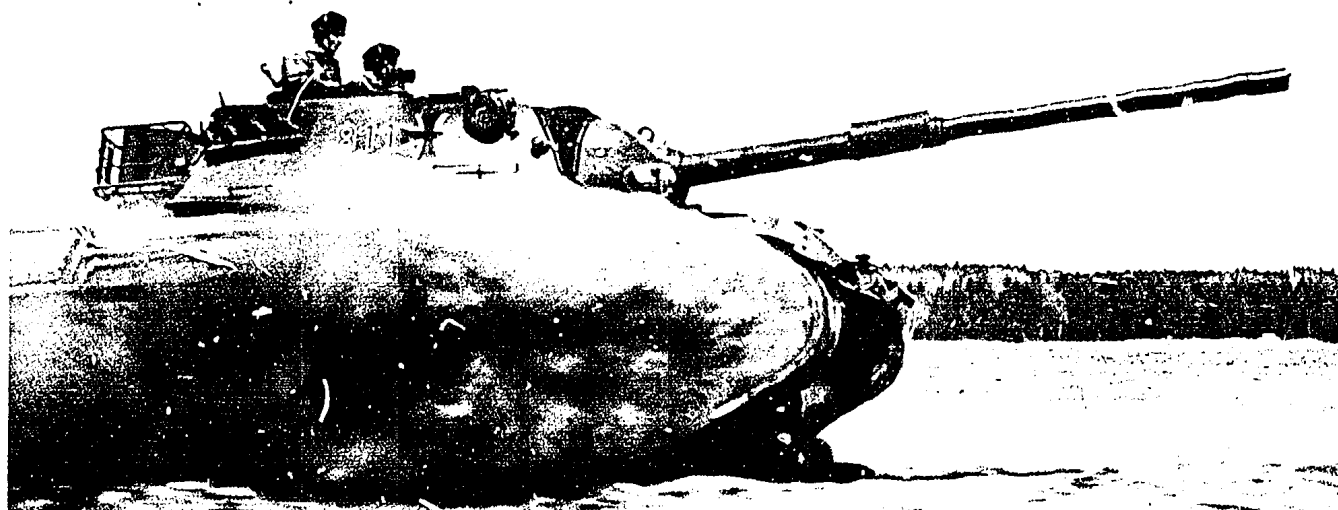
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West German Leopard tank

movements of forces, agreement to respect the new relationship of forces brought about by the agreement, and the like. The Belgians and West Germans are concerned that placing limits on the movement of forces across national boundaries could inhibit future European defense cooperation. A number of flank countries, especially Turkey, have been pressing for special constraints that would protect them from the impact of Soviet troop redeployments as a result of a force reduction agreement.

There is a greater measure of allied consensus on the separate but related question of preventing circumvention. The allies will be seeking measures to ensure that the Soviets will not undermine any force reduction agreement by increasing their troops in Hungary. One way NATO might seek to accomplish this could be the application of certain constraints to Hungarian territory. Any such attempt would feed the concerns of Italy and other NATO countries about parallel application of constraints.

Soviet statements have been conflicting on this subject. In part the conflict is a function of the interrelationship between the force reduction talks and the European security conference: the more the Soviets perceive that the security con-

ference risks becoming bogged down in military-related matters, the more they will try to push these subjects into the force reduction talks. During Brezhnev's trip to Bonn last May, he appeared relaxed about exchanging information on troop movements and having observers at maneuvers. But he wanted these subjects considered at the force reduction talks, not at the European security conference, where they have already caused considerable difficulty. In general, however, the Soviets have been negative on constraints and related concepts. At the preliminary talks, they said that ideas such as constraints amounted to espionage.

Verification

Allied views on verification are not at all well defined. There is agreement, however, that any verification measures should not interfere with "national technical means." Several verification measures are mentioned in the common allied position, among them the use of ground observers to verify agreed withdrawals and the employment of special mobile inspection teams that would travel by helicopter. The British, Canadians, and Dutch have also argued that any verification measures arising out of the force reduction agreement should be multinational.

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The few Soviet comments on verification indicate that Moscow views the subject with suspicion. At the preliminary talks, several Communist officials argued that verification should be limited to the fulfillment of the specific reduction measures that had been agreed. There have been some hints, however, that the Warsaw Pact members have considered a continuing verification organ. Any discussion of verification cannot escape the history of Soviet hostility to on-site inspection. There have, nevertheless, been some tentative indications of a softer attitude toward inspection of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact areas.

Nuclear Weapons

The US told the allies orally that it would be willing to use some nuclear weapons as a bargaining card in the force reduction negotiations. Nearly all of the allies immediately began asking questions. The West Germans have pursued the matter further by suggesting that an open-ended working group on the nuclear aspect of the force reduction talks be established. The Germans are concerned, among other things, about the possibility that including nuclear elements in the negotiations could result in a de facto nuclear ceiling on the Western side only. The British oppose the working group idea, preferring instead a discussion involving the US, UK, and West Germany. The US would like consideration of the matter postponed as long as possible since its ideas about how nuclear weapons might be included in the Vienna talks are still very general.

PROCEDURES AND TACTICS

The Western side hopes that the talks can get down to business on 30 October without further discussion of agenda or procedures. Most of the allies favor plenaries for a general discussion of views, but working groups, the use of "emissaries," and informal multilateral and bilateral meetings for more detailed bargaining.

NATO has outlined tactics only for the first few months of the negotiations. It hopes they will begin with a general presentation of viewpoints by both sides, to be followed by an elaboration of main themes. An outline of the general nature of

the common allied negotiating position would then be made known to the other side; a discussion of specific parts of the proposal would follow, beginning with pre-reduction constraints.

The Soviets are likely to take their usual cautious approach to the negotiations, allowing the West to make proposals and provide an information base while they probe for signs of Western disunity and "give." Moscow probably expects the talks to be lengthy and indeed may have an interest in keeping them going as long as it pursues a detente policy. For these reasons the Soviets may see a series of small steps, each building on previous agreements. The Soviet military's presumed distaste for reductions in general is another factor arguing for slow, phased change. Soviet resistance to what they consider undue complexity, whether in calculating forces, constraints, or verification, is nevertheless likely to lead them at some point to introduce a proposal for a simple, sweeping solution—such as mutual reductions by 10 or 15 percent—either as an early maneuver to throw the West off balance or as a reply to "complicated" Western proposals.

OUTLOOK

The real Soviet intentions toward the force reduction exercise are a major unknown. Many of the allies, although they would no doubt hesitate to say so explicitly, probably feel that the British are at least half right in their assessment that Moscow's basic aims in Europe have not changed and that the force reduction talks are just one more means to those ends.

Moscow should not be expected to be very helpful until the European security conference has come to a more or less successful end. The order of the day for the Soviets until then will be general statements, propagandistic proposals, and procedural delays. Chances seem slim that after the security conference is over the Soviets will summarily abandon the force reduction talks. Moscow is well aware of the integral connection of the negotiations to detente in general, and it may perceive opportunities to weaken Western defenses.

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Still, the linkage of the force reduction talks to the other ingredients of detente could also operate to place the talks in jeopardy. Should US-Soviet relations in general suffer, the Vienna negotiations would promptly feel the consequences. The escalating Middle East conflict is currently causing concern along these lines.

The preparatory talks last spring showed that allied unity cannot be taken for granted. Once they are face to face with the Soviets, however, they may get a new stimulus to preserve a common negotiating front. Enough allies now perceive enough advantages in the talks—such as opportunities for indigenous troop reductions—that they will be trying to preserve a fair measure of intra-Alliance agreement.

The preparatory talks also suggested that the actual negotiations will be long and tough and that the allies cannot expect to obtain precisely the results they seek. In the preparatory talks, the main question was the participation of Hungary, and nearly four months of discussion produced only an "agreement to disagree." The actual negotiations will be trying to lower the troop levels in Europe and yet maintain a military balance acceptable to both East and West. To solve the myriad of complex problems this goal entails, both sides will need to make concessions. In the process, the talks could become an all but permanent forum for detente maneuvering—in session for years.

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